

## **PERFORMANCE WORK STATEMENT**

### **Coastal Wetlands Work Assignment (WA) B-04**

#### **Work Assignment Manager (WAM):**

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#### **Background:**

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Wetlands Division and Oceans and Coastal Protection Division formed a Coastal Wetlands Team with the goals of 1) better understanding stressors leading to coastal wetland loss; 2) identifying and disseminating tools, strategies, policies and information to protect and restore coastal wetland resources; and 3) raising awareness of the functions and values of, threats to, and opportunities to protect and restore coastal wetlands. Consistent with other federal agencies, EPA is defining coastal wetlands as tidal and freshwater wetlands within, HUC-8 (Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) - 8-digit or watershed classification code) watersheds that are either below the head of tide and draining to the Atlantic, Pacific or Gulf of Mexico; or drain directly to the Great Lakes.

Two recent reports have prompted EPA to form a Coastal Wetlands Team. The first report by the Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM) recommends a national wetlands and climate change initiative to reduce impacts to wetlands, help wetlands to adapt and respond to climate change and provide leadership among programs.<sup>1</sup> ASWM calls for the initiative to include facilitation among climate, watershed and coastal zone programs; a survey of wetlands and climate policies, programs and other efforts; a comprehensive wetlands and climate change website; and identification and dissemination of best management practices to protect and help wetlands adapt to impacts of climate change. The second report by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) finds that from 1998 to 2004, wetlands in coastal watersheds in the Great Lakes, Atlantic and Gulf coasts have experienced an average net decrease of 59,000 acres per year.<sup>2</sup>

In response to NOAA and USFWS findings, EPA convened an Interagency Coastal Wetlands Workgroup with participation from EPA, NOAA, USFWS, United States

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<sup>1</sup> Association of State Wetland Managers (unpublished), Recommendations for a National Wetlands and Climate Change Initiative, January 12, 2009 draft.

<sup>2</sup> Stedman and Dahl (2008), Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Coastal Watersheds of the Eastern United States: 1998-2004.

Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to answer the following questions:

1. What are the specific factors responsible for the loss of coastal wetlands?
2. What array of actions might reduce or reverse the trends in coastal wetland loss?<sup>3</sup>

Participating agencies are addressing separate aspects of these questions and will build off each others' findings. NOAA, USFWS and COE are taking the lead with the first question and will cooperatively analyze reasons for wetland loss in approximately 10 – 12 coastal HUC-8 watersheds along the Gulf, Atlantic and Great Lakes coasts. They intend to compare data from the following sources: the status and trends report; COE's Operations and Maintenance Business Information Link (OMBIL) Regulatory Module (a database of federal Clean Water Act - Section 404 permits) and; NOAA's Coastal Change Analysis Program (a nationally-standardized database of land cover and land change information). The EPA Team will contribute to the first question by reviewing existing assessments and speaking with on-the-ground managers about coastal wetland loss in focus watersheds.

EPA is taking the lead on the second question by reviewing regulatory and voluntary efforts by federal, regional, state and local partners and assessing whether successful strategies to protect and restore coastal wetlands can be replicated in separate watersheds.

### **Purpose**

To achieve its goals, the EPA Team is answering:

1. What do existing assessments and managers on the ground indicate are factors responsible for coastal wetland losses?
2. What are examples of effective protection and restoration strategies and tools, and can they be transferred successfully to other watersheds?
3. What information gaps limit understanding of coastal wetland loss or management decisions to address loss?
4. How can EPA increase public understanding of the value of and threats to coastal wetlands, support strategies and tools, rules and policies to reduce or reverse loss, and help fill information gaps?

### **Geographic Scope**

EPA is focusing on all wetlands within coastal watersheds, defined as HUC-8 watersheds that drain to the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico or Pacific Ocean, as well as wetlands that drain directly to the Great Lakes. The EPA Team divides the coastal watersheds of the conterminous U.S. into seven regions: North Atlantic, from Maine to New York; Mid-

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<sup>3</sup> The EPA Team defines *coastal wetland loss* as "a decline in the areal extent or ecological integrity of wetlands in coastal watersheds."

Atlantic, from New Jersey to Virginia; South Atlantic, from North Carolina to the Atlantic coast of Florida; the Gulf of Mexico; the Great Lakes from Minnesota to New York; California; and the Pacific Northwest, including Oregon and Washington.

### **EPA Coastal Wetlands Team Tasks**

The EPA Team's efforts fit within four main components:

1. Regional Reviews
2. Workshop(s)
3. Pilots of Successful Strategies and Tools
4. Outreach

#### **1. Regional Reviews**

The EPA Team will conduct seven regional reviews of existing information on threats to coastal wetland extent and condition, strategies and tools to reduce or reverse losses, and information gaps that limit managers' ability to understand or implement strategies to address loss. Each review will contain "snapshot" analyses of one to three coastal watersheds representative of the region. The analyses will start with an introductory meeting in which the Team solicits existing reports on wetlands condition, extent and protection and restoration efforts in the study area.

After reviewing available information, the Team will conduct individual meetings with key stakeholders to 1) better understand coastal wetland condition and trends; 2) gain additional insights into stressors currently affecting or expected to threaten coastal wetlands; 3) identify existing tools, actions, strategies and policies to reduce or reverse wetland losses and adapt to changing conditions; and 4) identify data or analysis gaps that limit managers' ability to understand or address coastal wetland losses. The term 'stakeholders' indicate all participants and others individual identified by Work Assignment Manager (WAM).

The EPA Team will also visit one or all focal watersheds to examine existing tools and strategies employed to combat coastal wetland loss in the areas. These site visits will not entail fieldwork or original analysis of raw data. Upon completion of the analyses, the Team will coordinate a workshop for stakeholders throughout the region to share findings from the regional review and discuss how regulatory, voluntary and planning strategies and tools identified in the focus watersheds could be replicated elsewhere.

Given the objectives of the regional reviews, the EPA Team will select focal watersheds for analyses based on available wetland condition assessments, variety of efforts to protect and restore coastal wetlands and willingness of stakeholders to collaborate with the EPA Team. The focal watersheds will overlap with watersheds under evaluation by NOAA, USFWS and the Corps where possible in order to facilitate information sharing among Interagency Workgroup participants.

## **2. National Workshop**

The EPA Team will conduct a national workshop to disseminate the findings of the seven regional coastal wetland reviews. Participants at this workshop will also participate in initial planning for “pilots” to assess how readily tools and strategies to combat coastal wetland losses can be implemented. Planning activities could include: discussion of preliminary selection criteria for strategies; tools and watersheds and; draft frameworks for evaluating the success of implementation efforts. During the national workshop, there will also be discussions to examine the data gaps and to identify approaches/tools/techniques that will more effectively address loss.

## **3. Pilots of Successful Strategies and Tools**

EPA will assess whether efforts identified during the regional reviews and the national workshop are transferable to other coastal wetland watersheds by piloting strategies and tools in approximately six to eight coastal watersheds and evaluating their impact on wetland resources. The EPA team will work with partners such as EPA Regions, National Estuary Programs (NEPs), state agencies, coastal management programs and EPA’s Office of Research and Development to develop a framework for assessing the effectiveness of these strategies, tools, rules and voluntary actions. The EPA Team will likely select smaller, well-monitored watersheds for the pilots in order to more easily detect the impacts of various management strategies.

## **4. Outreach**

The EPA Team will conduct outreach to disseminate findings from the regional reviews, national workshops, and pilots. Notably, it will produce summaries of each Regional Review, National Workshop and Pilots, and make these reports available to the public. Building on these findings, the Team will work with its Interagency Workgroup partners to develop or improve strategies for federal agencies to reduce or reverse coastal wetland losses, such as changes to permitting or grant programs. Finally, the Team will augment an existing EPA website to create a coastal wetlands clearinghouse featuring the Team’s findings, highlighting best practices and providing links and resources for federal, state and local wetlands managers.

### **Period of Performance:**

Date of the Issuance – February 28, 2010

### **Tasks and Deliverables:**

#### **Task 1. Work Plan and Budget**

The contractor shall prepare a detailed work plan and budget for the accomplishment of the indicated tasks within 21 calendar days of receipt of the work assignment. The work plan shall include a description of: (a) proposed staff; (b) resources necessary for each task, (c) the number of hours and labor classifications proposed for each task, to include both prime contractor and subcontractor (if any) labor; and (d) a list of deliverables, with due dates and schedule for deliverables.

### **Deliverables Task 1 - Work Plan including budget**

The contractor shall provide a work plan including the technical and cost proposal.

### **Task 2. Assistance with 7 Regional Coastal Wetland Reviews**

The contractor shall provide support services for the following: (1) pre-visit and meetings preparation and support; (2) on-site interviews/meetings and administrative support and; (3) post-visit and meeting support services.

(1) Preparation - The contractor shall provide the following pre-visit and meetings preparation and support services:

1. Assist in determining which watersheds in the Regions should serve as focal representative by collecting and examining readily available existing data
2. Prepare GIS map and data layers for focal watersheds
3. Collect readily available assessments, and background reports for focus watersheds and coastal Region requested from stakeholders
4. Summarize findings of stakeholder supplied reports collected prior to the on-site visit
5. Prepare graphics, matrices, and power point slides that capture stressors, tools/techniques, information gaps, and needs for each focus watershed for the on-site visit
6. Distribute Regional Review Orientation Packet to relevant stakeholders as identified by the EPA WAM prior to an on-site visit
7. Organize participants by affiliation and manage their registration and contact information
8. Participate in kick-off or follow-up conference calls with stakeholders
9. Produce brief summary of relevant wetland regulations and policies for watersheds identified for on-site interviews/meetings
10. Contact and communicate with identified stakeholders to schedule on-site interviews/meetings and communicate logistics.
11. Provide plans and develop lists of action items and equipment relating to logistics support for the on-site interviews/meetings. Depending on the individual meeting site and requested or via written technical direction by the EPA WAM, the following services may be requested:
  - (a) Reserve or book a facility to hold the on-site interviews/meetings;
  - (b) Provide liaison services and communication between EPA and the facility and;
  - (c) Identify and reserve all necessary meeting-relating equipment such as flip charts, computers, and/or projectors for presentations

(2) On-Site Support - The contractor shall provide on-site interviews/meetings and administrative support:

1. Provide meeting-relating equipment and logistical support services during on-site interviews/meetings (e.g. computer, projector, flip charts, and set up for presentation).
2. Collect data and reports provided by stakeholders.
3. Take notes of key and salient points (requested or via written technical direction by the EPA WAM) during on-site interviews/meetings.
4. Record, organize and provide a list of stakeholders' responses to EPA questions provided by the EPA WAM.
5. Facilitate discussions if requested or via written technical direction by the EPA WAM.

**Post On-site Visit** - The contractor shall post-on-site interviews/meetings administrative and support services:

1. Compile and distill notes from on-site interviews/meetings into brief accurate summary.
2. Analyze data/reports collected during or after on-site interviews/meetings into a succinct summary that includes visuals and graphics.
3. Distribute notes and data/reports summaries to stakeholders for review and comment after review by EPA WAM.
4. Incorporate comments received on meeting notes and consolidated information from stakeholders.
5. Compile and distribute final summary of notes and data/reports to stakeholders.
6. Prepare outreach materials.

**Deliverables Task 2 - Regional Coastal Wetland Reviews Deliverables** – (Orientation Packet, GIS Maps, Distillation of Reports Provided and Findings, PowerPoint Slides, Summary of On-Site Interviews/Meetings)

**2a** - The contractor shall provide the following deliverables as requested and described via written technical direction by the EPA WAM. The deliverables shall include: Orientation Packet, GIS Maps, Distillation of Reports Provided and Findings, (PowerPoint Slides – as requested by the EPA WAM)

**2b** - The contractor shall provide the following deliverables as requested and described via written technical direction by the EPA WAM. The deliverables shall include: Summary of On-Site Interviews/Meetings. (PowerPoint Slides – as requested by the EPA WAM)

### **Task 3. Regional Coastal Wetland Reviews Workshops (Optional Task)**

If requested via written technical direction by the EPA WAM, the contractor shall provide the following support services:

1. Coordinate, plan and organize logistics for Regional Workshops such as:
  - i. Reserve a facility to hold the Workshop;
  - ii. Provide liaison communication and services between EPA and the facility and;

- iii. Plan to provide and/or reserve all necessary equipment such as flip charts, computers, and/or projector for presentations
2. Provide list(s) of workshop participants by affiliation and organize and update their registration and contact information;
3. Distribute Workshop Packets to participants, that includes final report from the Summary of On-Site Interviews/Meetings conducted within that Region (see deliverables from Task 2). The contents of the Workshop Packet shall include workshop logistics, and other materials as requested via written technical direction by EPA WAM;
4. Analyze data and assess reports collected from on-site visit or collected by contractor after request of the EPA WAM into a succinct summary as well as presentation slides that includes visuals and graphics
5. Provide note taking services during workshop sessions. The level of detail and subject will be described by technical direction by the EPA WAM;
6. Provide Facilitation services for sessions at workshop. The level of facilitation will be requested and described by technical direction by the EPA WAM;
7. Provide logistical support services at workshop sessions. Provide and/or reserve all necessary equipment such as flip charts, computers, and/or projector for presentations
8. Develop a draft Summary Report of the compilation of the workshop sessions participants' comments;
9. Following acceptance by EPA WAM, distribute the draft Summary Report to workshop sessions participants for their comments;
10. Develop a Final Workshop Summary report as requested via written technical direction by the EPA WAM;
11. Provide outreach materials with graphics to be posted on EPA's website based on outcomes of Regional Workshops. The types and composition of the outreach materials will be requested and described by technical direction by the EPA WAM;

**Deliverables Task 3 - Regional Coastal Wetland Reviews Workshops (Optional Task) Delievables** –(Orientation Packet, GIS Maps, Distillation of Reports Provided and Findings, PowerPoint Slides, Summary of On-Site Interviews/Meetings)

**3a** - The contractor shall provide the following deliverables as requested and described by technical direction by the EPA WAM. The deliverables shall include: Regional Workshop Packet, GIS map(s) and graphics, Summary Report from On-Site visits, Data Analysis Slides and Summary

**3b** - The contractor shall provide the following deliverables as requested and described by technical direction by the EPA WAM. The deliverables shall include: Outreach Materials, Summary Report

**Summary of Deliverables**

Task	Deliverable	Due Date to EPA
Task 1	Work Plan	Within 21 calendar days after receipt of WA
Task 2	2a -Orientation Packet, GIS	15 days prior to date of each Regional

	map(s), Distillation of Reports Provided and Presentation Slides	Focus Watershed On-Site Review
Task 2	2b - Summary of on-site interviews/meetings	15 days after Regional On-Site Visit
Task 3	3a - Regional Workshop Packet, GIS map(s) and graphics, Summary Report from On-Site visits, Data Analysis Slides and Summary	15 days prior to Regional Workshop
Task 3	3b - Outreach Materials, Summary Report	20 days after Regional Workshop

### **Assumptions**

EPA will indicate the order of Regional Reviews and watersheds chosen to the contractor via technical direction of the EPA WAM.

The report summarizers and note-takers (Task 2) have a general understanding of tools to address wetland loss such as zoning ordinances, wetland regulations, and mitigation policies (and if possible, permits).

The workshop facilitator(s) (Task 3) has/have previous facilitation experience and/or knowledge/expertise in the wetland topics mentioned directly above.

### **General WA Requirements**

This WA also includes monthly progress and financial reports which are to be submitted.

- a. Monthly Progress Reports: The Contractor shall provide a monthly technical and financial progress report briefly stating the progress status and progress made, and any problems experienced, with remedial action taken or recommendations for their solution. Complete information pertaining to the Monthly Progress Reports can be found in EP-C-09-020 Award/Contract document in Attachment 2 – Reports of Work.
- b. Due Dates: The contractor shall notify the EPA WAM in advance if a due date will not be met and request a revised date.
- c. Draft Documents: The contractor is required to submit draft documents for EPA WAM's review. Draft documents shall be prepared in an electronic format (MS Word, tif/gif, PowerPoint). EPA WAM will provide comments on draft submissions prior to submission of final documents.
- d. Final Documents The contractor shall submit final documents both electronically (MS Word, tif/gif, pdf, PowerPoint) and in hardcopy as specified by the EPA WAM. If requested via the EPA WAM, outreach materials may be required to be on a mini-DC for distribution at workshops, meetings, or conferences.